

Social Representation of Japanese Character in Film Pacchigi (2005)

Emma Rahmawati Fatimah¹, Santi Andayani², Gathisa Silvia Gunawan³, Aisyah Bellatrix
Kancanadewi⁴

{emma.rahma0924@ub.ac.id¹, santi_andayani@ub.ac.id², thisasilvia@student.ub.ac.id³,
aisyahbellatrix@student.ub.ac.id⁴}

Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia^{1,2,3,4}

Abstract. Negative sentiments against Koreans in Japan have become a social issue that has attracted quite much attention. Many studies discuss the discrimination and identity crisis experienced by zainichi (Korean ethnicity living in Japan) in literary works where Japanese people are depicted as those who discriminate and injustice against Koreans. However, other impressions are captured in Zainichi cinema about the characterization of Japanese people. In the zainichi cinema, the director, who is Japanese, does not show the badness of Japanese people. This study focuses on examining how Japanese people are represented in their interactions with Koreans from the film Pacchigi (2005). To examine how social representation is formed in Zainichi's cinema, authors used representation theory by Stuart Hall. To collect research data using documentation techniques and literature study. Data analysis used the descriptive qualitative method. The study results show that in Pacchigi film the Japanese characterization represented as a positive or humanistic character.

Keywords: Characterization, Social Representation, Zainichi Cinema

1 Introduction

Zainichi or Korean living in Japan is currently one of the largest ethnic minorities in Japan. Korean zainichi arrival wave in Japan occurred during the Japanese colonialism of Korea, which was around 1910-1945. In 1910 after Japan had annexed Korea, many of Korea's natural resources were transported to Japan, so many later migrated to Japan, where at that time, many Japanese industries were developing during World War I and were lack of labor. However, low wages, forced labor, and even many Korean women are forced into the world of military prostitution. Acts of discrimination often afflict the Korean ethnic. This historical background then triggered the sentiments of the Korean people, especially towards the Japanese government. Now, Korean zainichi still feel the Japanese people discriminate against them, such as at work or in schools. A 2014 BBC World Service poll found that 79% of South Koreans view Japan's influence negatively, and 15% express a positive view.

Thus, the zainichi, especially the first generation of zainichi, have experienced constant discrimination from the local community due to their ethnic background and social status, and they tend to hold grudges during the colonial period. This fact is represented in zainichi cinema, the global film industry of Japan, South Korea, and North Korea. The film's themes depict the struggles of Korean people or the Korean community living in Japan. According to Oliver Dew's research in his book entitled *Cinema Zainichi: Korean-In-Japan Film Culture* in 2016, self-

representation in zainichi films can be seen as part of the zainichi empowerment movement. This desire began in 1970 to voice the citizenship movement. This movement also seeks representation and recognition in public life, blue-chip companies, and public professions prohibited for non-Japanese citizens and the right to become a Japanese citizen with a Korean name [1].

Rahwati et al. [2] studied about zainichi using postcolonial studies and found out the majority group of Japanese people as 'the self,' while the zainichi minority group as 'the others'. This study also discusses how Zainichi figures articulate Zainichi's identity negotiations and resistance. In addition, this study also uncovers text discourse that will show the forms of identity negotiation and resistance carried out by the characters representing the zainichi group in the novel *Go*. The representation of Korean zainichi has also been carried out by Trihtarani et al [3]. This study discusses several Korean zainichi in Japanese society: pluralist, nationalist, individualist, and assimilationist. By looking at the identity crisis experienced by characters in Pachinko's novel, this study shows that Korean zainichi will not easily change and will remain in a marginal position.

Current research focuses more on the representation of zainichi, but how the expression of Japanese people, especially in the zainichi film, has never been reviewed. Thus, interesting to study because most of Zainichi's films have directors and actors from Japan, so the point of view of the storytelling is more from the point of view of the Japanese themselves. The author did the representation of Japanese characters in the Zainichi film in a previous study in *Izumi Journal* [4]. What distinguishes the two is that the object of research in the journal uses a zainichi film with a war background. In contrast, this study uses a Pacchigi film with the theme of school conflict involving two ethnic groups, Japanese and Korean. This study also sees the representation of the Japanese generation of young people who do not know war.

The discontinuity of personnel in the postcolonial world of zainichi films led to the absence of verified Korean filmmakers. This fact leads to the lack of representation of Koreans from mainstream film distribution channels in the post-war period as a result of the abolition of legal status, social status, and citizenship of Koreans in Japan in the years immediately following the end of the war [1]. Therefore, there are more representations of Zainichi as a supporting character than the main character in Zainichi films. Representation is how the media describes a phenomenon object. Representations are not formed after a phenomenon occurs but representations that give meaning to the phenomenon. The picture made by the media is not a reflection of events that have a certain purpose but rather the society that makes the meaning of the object [5].

According to Hall [6], the form of interpretation of each media can be different and even contradict each other, have positive or negative connotations, support or reject, and so on. Hall focuses on the role of the media as the holder of control over the meaning of the phenomena that have occurred so that the media have full power in shaping reality for the wider community, based on their respective thoughts, ideologies, and interests.

In the Theory of Meaning, message reception analysis refers to studying the general public's meaning, production, and experience concerning interacting with the media [5]. Hall divides the process of receiving and interpreting meaning by society into three positions. First, dominant acceptance is when the community accepts and decodes the message from the media according to the connotation the sender wants to convey. Second, negotiation acceptance is when the public gets and understands the message displayed by the press without manifesting it. Third, favor of the opposition is when the public has accepted and understood the message conveyed, both literally, and the connotations are given, but they reject the message completely [5].

2 Research Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Authors carried out data collection techniques through library research techniques. The data analysis technique steps:

- a) Describe the structure of the Pacchigi film (the characterization elements).
- b) Analyze the social representation of Japanese people, especially in their interactions with Koreans in the film Pacchigi.
- c) Conclude the analysis that has been done.

3 Finding and Discussion

Pacchigi film is directed by Kazuyuki Izutsu, famous as a film director, screenwriter, and film critic. Izutsu frequently appears on television in Japan and is known for his critical commentary. The film is produced by Yoshiro Hosono, Hitomi Ishihara, Tomiyasu Ishikawa, Shironori Kawasaki, Haruo Kawashima, Yoshihiro Nagata, including one Korean producer Bong-Ou Lee. This film won “Best Picture” from 48th Blue Ribbon Awards in 2006 [7].

Pacchigi film which has a forward plot, the story is more about the struggle to get love and honor in his life. The main characters are dominated by students from Japanese high schools and from Kita-Chosen Gakkou, a high school with mostly North Korean students living in Japan. The clash between school gangs of these two ethnicities became the basic color of Pacchigi's film. The film is set in the 1968's when the song Imjin-gawa was recorded for the first time and this song became one of the stories in the film. The song Imjin-gawa is very popular among the North Korean public and the zainichi. The lyrics of the song Imjin-gawa tell about the imjin river and the hometown being separated into two countries which illustrates the condition of the Imjin river which is also the barrier between North and South Korea. The setting of the place in the form of a river also supports the story about the differences in views that occur between two gangs and two different ethnicities, namely between Japanese students and Korean Zainichi students.

In terms of characters and characterizations, Japanese characters who often appear in films are Matsuyama Kosuke, Yoshida Norio, Momoko, and Fukawa sensei. The characters displayed are also dominated by positive traits, such as not liking to fight, hardworking, kind, self-sacrificing, art lovers, reading books, and teachers who are strict but like to joke and also compete. Other Japanese characters are represented as students who are involved in gang fights. Most of them have antagonistic characters, such as fighting, discriminatory, brutal, cunning, like to annoy and belittle others, which in this case are Korean zainichi students.

3.1 Social Representation of Japanese People in Their Interaction with Koreans in Pacchigi Film (Japanese as People who Respect the Culture of Other Nations)

Data 1

This scene is in the Pacchigi film, which depicts when Kosuke joins the An Sung family, having a farewell party. An Sung's family includes Kyung Ja, and his best friend Jae Dok is hanging out, eating together and listening to music.



Fig. 1. Kosuke joins the An Sung family farewell party

An Sung: *The stupid boy!*

Jae Dok : *You came for revenge? Could it be that the one in your guitar case is a machine gun?!*

Kosuke : *I was told by my sister... ah, by Kyung Ja-san...*

Relatives: *Hey! I'm the president of the Kyung Ja Chaste Protector Society, you know!*

Kyung Ja: *You came!*

An Sung: *You guys are dating?*

Relatives: *Kyung Ja with this boy? That's right, oh!*

Kosuke : *My name is Matsuyama. Please help. I heard there's a party here.*

An Sung's mother: *Yes, that's right! Come here! An Sung, who is good to him, huh! Jae Dok, you too!*

Here Kosuke looks polite when introducing himself. He can blend in and interact well in the middle of the Zainichi family party. He even played Imjin-gawa's song with his guitar accompanied by Kyung Ja's flute. This attitude shows that Kosuke as a Japanese person considers the culture of the Zainichi people to be appreciated.

Data2

Sakazaki : *This river flows right in the middle of the Korean Peninsula.*

Norio : *Vertically?*

Sakazaki : *Horizontally, please. Originally, this song was a North Korean song by Park Se Yeong, then a Kyoto man translated it and sang it in Japanese. The song tells the story of a river dividing the country into two and hoping that the country will become one again.*

Waiter : *Separated into south and north, how tragic, huh.*

Sakazaki : *If you want to look at it further, it happened because of the Japanese occupation. It was our fault that the country was divided into two.*

Norio : *That's right.*

Sakazaki's character is a musician who owns a musical instrument shop where Kosuke and Norio often visit. In the scene above, Sakazaki tells the historical background of the song called Imjin-gawa. Imjin-gawa in Japanese means Imjin River. The river is in Korea and flows in the middle of the Korean peninsula separating North and South Korea. The lyrics of the song describe the beauty of the clear Imjin river and the hope of freedom. However, in Japan, the Folk Crusaders music group changed the lyrics to make them more acceptable. However, the Japanese government considered the song too political, so it was banned in Japan [8]. In the scene above, Sakazaki is also depicted as a Japanese person who knows a lot about the history between Japan and Korea because he knows why Imjin-gawa's song is banned in Japan. He also felt that the Japanese occupation also contributed to the splitting of North and South Korea.

Cultural differences between Japan and Korea are part of the issues that want to be discussed in this film. The representation of Japanese people as people who respect other nations is illustrated by the closeness between Japanese characters who establish loving and friendly relations with Koreans, namely the relationship between Kosuke, a Japanese youth, and Kyung Ja, a Korean woman, an Sung character, a Korean youth and Tomoko. A Japanese girl, and the friendship between Kosuke and Ang sun and his gang, the Koreans. This relationship can be seen in the following data.

Data 3

In this scene, Kosuke, who asks Kyung Ja to have a love relationship with him, is quite stunned by the next question asked by Kyung Ja, namely, will Kosuke become Korean if they are serious about getting married later.



Fig. 2. Kosuke asking Kyung Ja to date

Kosuke : *Will you date me?*

Kyung Ja: *Where? If...*

Kosuke : *Yes?*

Kyung Ja: *It's just a wish, Ko-chan and I were serious about dating until we finally got married... can you be Korean?*

Kyung Ja's question was beyond Kosuke's expectation where at that time, he had not thought about the relationship to the extent of changing citizenship. For Zainichi, this question is certainly a natural thing because the issue of citizenship always arises in the relationship between Koreans living in Japan. Moreover, there was a period in the history of the zainichi their rights as Korean citizens were deprived of while living in Japan.

In the scene depicted, Kosuke can only be silent when Kyung Ja asks the question. Kosuke's silence, apart from shock, could also be said to be a form of contemplation. Kosuke didn't say yes or no but gave himself time to think so that Kyung Ja wouldn't be disappointed if Kosuke's answer didn't match his expectations.

Data 4

In the film *Pacchigi*, the friendship between Kosuke and Koreans is also seen when Jae Dok dies due to a fight between Korean gangs and Japanese gangs. Even though Jae Dok died due to Japanese actions, Bang Ho and An Sung didn't necessarily blame Kosuke, who was Japanese. Likewise, Kosuke is a friend who remains loyal and respects the two by joining in drinking sake as an expression of regret for Jae Dok's death. As in the following scene, Kosuke's respect is also shown by accepting Bang Ho's offer as a brother by drinking sake as a symbol.

Bang Ho: *Kosuke, you drink here too.*

An Sung: *Bang Ho, I give this sake cup to you as a brother.*

Bang Ho: *Yes.*

An Sung: *Kan'ge, with you, I give this glass of sake to you as a distant cousin.*

Kosuke: *...I really want to make a band with Jae Dok...*

So, from this awareness, we can say that the mutual respect was shown between Kosuke, Bang Ho, and An Sung constructs an image that Japanese and Korean can also be friends and respecting other's cultures regardless of what happened in the past. And this image is expected to be captured by the audience as a message of peace from this film.

3.2 The Japanese as peace-loving people

Data 5



Fig. 3. Norio and Kosuke talks about the war

Norio : *Hey, Kosuke. If America and the Soviet Union went to war, what would happen to the world? If we are careless, we might also be divided into two. For example, how is the territory divided along this river?! Wow, this one is already separate. It's going to be difficult. We can't even get to Kyoto Station.*

Kosuke : *Why is there a war, huh?*

Norio : *It's because they don't get along. Like here. Over there is a Korean settlement while we are in this area. That flute-playing girl should live there, too, right?*

Norio and Kosuke question why the war happened and how it will affect Japan if superpowers like America and Russia go to war. They assume if the area where they live is divided. Due to inconsistency, war broke out. As in the cold war, the Japanese did not get along with the Koreans, separated the settlements. Kosuke and Norio are on a bridge in the city of Kyoto that separates Japanese and Korean settlements or zainichi. They are reminded of Kyung Ja, a girl from Kita-Chosen High School who is good at blowing the flute, catching Kosuke's attention. They regret why Zainichi doesn't get along with the Japanese. They represent the young generation of Japan who wants peace.

Data 6

Kosuke : *I'm Kosuke Matsuyama from Higashi High School.*

Norio : *We are peace ambassadors!*

Gang Ja : *Ambassador?*

Norio : *Right, right, we even came without permission first.*

Kosuke : *We wondered if you would be interested in having a friendly football match with our school. Please accept this.*

Their homeroom teacher asked Kosuke and Norio to come to Kita-Chosen High School to invite a back and forth friendly soccer match between the two high schools. This invitation was

sent following a brawl between Higashi High School and Kita-Chosen High School, where there were many students of Zainichi descent. Even though they are ridiculed and know that there is a risk of getting hurt, Kosuke and Norio still go to Kita-Chosen High School to invite the soccer match. This scene shows that Kosuke and Norio as a young generation of Japanese who love peace.

Data 7

Japanese teacher : *Mao Zedong from China said that he fought to eliminate war itself. In today's match, for the sake of peace... let's fight for peace!*

Norio : *Okay!*

Korean Teacher : *You have to fight it out!*

The scene above depicts the atmosphere before the friendly match between Higashi High and Kita-Chosen High. The homeroom teachers of the two schools encouraged their teams and stated that the match was conducted to achieve peace after previously the two high schools were involved in a brawl between students. According to Higashi High School's homeroom teacher, rather than fighting each other without rules with brawls, it's better to compete healthily through a fair and peaceful friendly match. This act represents that Japanese people like healthy competition and love peace.

3.3 Japanese people are described as self-sacrificing people

Data 8



Fig. 4. Gang Ja ask Momoko about her pregnancy

Gang Ja : *Does he (An Sung) know?*

Momoko: *(silence)*

Gang Ja : *Stupid! Why didn't you tell him?*

Momoko: *How can I rely on a man who will leave this country?*

Gang Ja : *Have you considered your son's feelings?*

Momoko: *I don't have a father myself either...*



Fig. 5. Momoko told An Sung to go home to Korea

An Sung: *Momoko, I'm not going home.*
 Momoko: *you can go... We'd both tag along.*

This scene in Pacchigi's film depicts when Gang Ja finally finds out that Momoko is pregnant with An Sung's child. Momoko chose not to tell An Sung because previously, Momoko knew that An Sung would return to Korea. Momoko also did not think about abortion and chose to give birth to An Sung's child. Momoko is even willing to come with An Sung back to Korea with his son. In general, Japanese people have a negative view of zainichi people. However, Momoko accepts An Sung, even willing to leave her homeland for An Sung. This attitude shown by Momoko represents Japanese people who are willing to sacrifice.

Although the characters in Pacchigi's film represent many positive sides, there are also negative representations of Japanese people captured from the films. Those are as follows.

3.4 Japanese as people who like to belittle people and make a riot

Data 9

Japanese student A : *Want to have fun with us behind Ginkakuji?*
 Korean student : *Our school is there. You want us to drag you there, huh?!*
 Japanese Student B : *Special Barbecue School!*
 Korean girl : *You underestimate us?!*

The scene above depicts when Japanese high school students meet Korean high school students on the street. They tease Korean high school students like they tease cheap girls. Even though the students were not afraid and resisted, the students from the Japanese high school still mocked the Korean high school as a school with a bad image. This attitude shows that Japanese people are represented negatively, namely as people who like to belittle others and cause a commotion.

Data 10

Jaе Dok : *Japanese, you bastard! Here's another smack for you! ...What's with that head of yours?*

Norio : *This is Akamatsu's hairstyle. You know Ai Akamatsu.*
 Jae Dok : *Don't bother with Akamatsu. Tell me who did it!*
 Norio : *Ah, yes! Whoever has done bad things to them, please confess and come out.*
 Japanese student : *What the hell, you kimchi!!!*

The scene above depicts a brawl that takes place inside the Higashi High School bus. Higashi High School students call Kita Chosen High School students, thereby angering Jae Dok and his friends. A frightened Norio tells his Japanese friends to confess who is bothering the Kita Chosen High School, students. But other Japanese students even call Jae Dok kimchi Korean food. From this scene, it is clear that Japanese people are represented as racists, despise other nations and seek commotion.

3.5 Japanese as people who have a prejudice against Zainichi

In the Pacchigi film, there is a picture of Japanese people who are often suspicious of Zainichi's presence. Although sometimes it is visually difficult to distinguish between Japanese and Korean people because of their similar physical characteristics, by looking at the traditional clothes worn by Kyung Ja, Kosuke's mother, Sanae Matsuyama, immediately knew that they were not her son's schoolmates. Therefore, Sanae emphasized by asking that they were not from a private school because they saw Jae Dok wearing a school uniform similar to Kosuke's.

Data 11



Fig. 6. Sanae saw Kyung Ja in traditional Korean clothes with suspicion

Sanae : *Welcome! Geez! Kosuke, you look like a dying person! What have you eaten?*
 Kosuke : *Intestines, pork intestines. Grilled pork intestine.*
 Sanae : *Where?*
 Kosuke : *Park.*
 Kyung Ja: *There was a celebration there.*
 Sanae : *You two aren't from a private school, are you?*
 Kosuke : *The goal is the Security State of the People's Republic of Korea, right?*
 Sanae : *So? Your goal?*
 Kosuke : *Why me? Yes, this is my family.*
 Jae Dok : *Well, you see, there is a ship to return to Korea, so those who want to go home can go home by boat. Kyung Ja, come on.*
 Kyung Ja: *See you later, Kou-chan. Oh yes, my name is Lee Kyung Ja.*
 Kosuke : *Mom won't say hello back?*
 Sanae : *My name is Sanae Matsuyama.*

The scene also shows that Kosuke's social status in Japanese society is included in the upper class. With his father's background, a Buddhist priest, Kosuke is expected to continue his father's

profession so that Sanae, as his mother, is very concerned about Kosuke's association and behavior. Drinking until drunk was not what Sanae expected to happen to Kosuke, so when Kosuke came home drunk, Sanae immediately suspected who Kosuke's friends who drove him were. Suspicion grew when she saw a girl in traditional Korean clothes and a man with a different accent from the Japanese escorting Kosuke.

Japanese people are often suspicious of Koreans, of course, related to the image of Koreans themselves in most Japanese people at that time, where Koreans were considered immigrants who often caused trouble in Japan. Not obeying the rules, often committing crimes are some of the bad images attached to the zainichi.

3.6 Japanese as people who didn't understand Korean-Japanese history in the past

In the following data, Japanese people are represented as people who do not understand how the relationship between Korea and Japan was. Japan, which annexed Korea around 1910, did much to the Korean side.

Data 12



Fig. 7. Haraboji poured out anger on Kosuke in Jae Dok death ceremony

Haraboji: *Go. Go away! Get out of here. I speak Japanese, you understand.*

Relatives: *Grandpa, never mind...*

Haraboji: *Have you ever eaten river clams from the Yodo River? Or weeds by the roadside? ...I live in my home country growing rice. Then suddenly, I was handed a piece of paper and thrown into the truck. My grandmother was crying. My grandmother cried until she rolled in our fields! While on the ship in Busan, I even thought about jumping into the sea and dying! They took our people to the bone! Japanese boy like you know what? You will never know, idiot! We are different from you!*

Relatives: *Do you know who dug the Ikoma Tunnel? Even if the one receiving the contract is either the Obayashi Group or the Kobayashi Group... Then the marble was used to build the parliament building. Do you know where the marble was mined and who mined it?*

Haraboji: *A kid like you knows what? You don't even know. So get out of here! ...*

...I used to steal pork leftovers from the Japanese, but the guards saw and beat me so badly that my legs were bent until now.

Relatives: *Me too. I don't know if my brother is alive or dead.*

Haraboji: *GO!!! I don't want you here... Please go away...*

As mentioned in the dialogue between Harboji, the elders in the zainichi community are irritated and disturbed by Kosuke's presence at the death ceremony of Jae Dok, who died in a

fight with a Japanese youth gang. Harboji poured out the anger and disappointment on Kosuke, who he knew was Japanese.

From the conversation above, it is known that Harboji insulted Kosuke as a person who did not understand history. Kosuke, as the younger generation did not experience the war period and in Japanese schools, the curriculum did not mention at all how the behavior of the Japanese army or government at that time during their occupation in Korea did injustice to Koreans. Because of this, many young people in Japan don't understand the history and can't understand the feelings of the Zainichi, who still feel discriminated against until now.

4 Conclusion

From the data found above, it is known that the representation of Japanese people in Pacchigi films shows more positive or humanistic Japanese characters, such as:

- 1) People who respect the culture of other nations.
- 2) Peace-loving people.
- 3) People who are willing to sacrifice.
- 4) People who respect other nations.

But Japanese people are also represented as people who have bad qualities but not as many positive traits, namely:

- 1) People who like to belittle people and make a fuss.
- 2) People who have a prejudice against zainichi.
- 3) People who don't know Korean-Japanese history in the past.

The finding of positive character representation in Pacchigi's film shows a kind of social construction to be formed through zainichi films by Japanese directors.

The image of Japanese people in their interactions with Koreans is often represented as cruel, arrogant, and looks down on Koreans. However, in this Zainichi film, the director changes the image to a Japanese person with positive characters like the findings above. The Japanese character, Kosuke, is a Japanese generation who did not experience direct conflict with ethnic Koreans during the war. So he does not have any prejudice against zainichi, as is generally depicted in zainichi literature. Today, Korean and Japanese children live side by side. In this film, it is not seen that Japanese people use zainichi just like in the war period, but zainichi, who appear to be parasites in Japanese society because they cause many problems. The director hopes that the audience of this film will see a Japanese person like Kosuke, the main character of the film Pacchigi.

References

- [1] A. Dew, *Film Zainichi: Korean in Japan Film Culture*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- [2] W. Rahwati, B. Mulyadi, and F. Purwadi, "The Negotiation of Zainichi Identity and Resistance to Japanese Domination in Kazuki Kaneshiro Literary Text," *Izumi*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 155–165, 2020.
- [3] F. Tihtaranni, M. Ridha A Fasya, N. Yusticia, and N. Setyaningsih, "Antara Zainichi Dan Pachinko: Representasi Zainichi Korea Dalam Novel Pachinko Karya Min Jin Lee," *Poetika*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 171–187, 2019.

- [4] S. Andayani, E. R. Fatimah, G. S. Gunawan, and A. B. Kancanadewi, "Social Representation of Japanese Characters in Zainichi Film," *Izumi*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 398–410, 2021, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14710/izumi.10.2.398-410>.
- [5] F. Patria, "Memahami Interaksi Media dengan Teori Stuart Hall," *Kumparan*, 2020. .
- [6] S. Hall, *Culture, Media, and Identities*. Sage Publication, Inc; Open University Press, 1997.
- [7] Asianwiki, "ND." .
- [8] Japanoscope.com, "No Title." .